

MRD anticipates the publication challenges of Future Earth's vision

Future Earth's 2025 Vision

The vision of Future Earth is for people to thrive in a sustainable and equitable world.

This requires contributions from a new type of science that links disciplines, knowledge systems and societal partners to support a more agile global innovation system.

Source: Future Earth. 2014. Future Earth Strategic Research Agenda. Paris. ICSU

Publication challenges

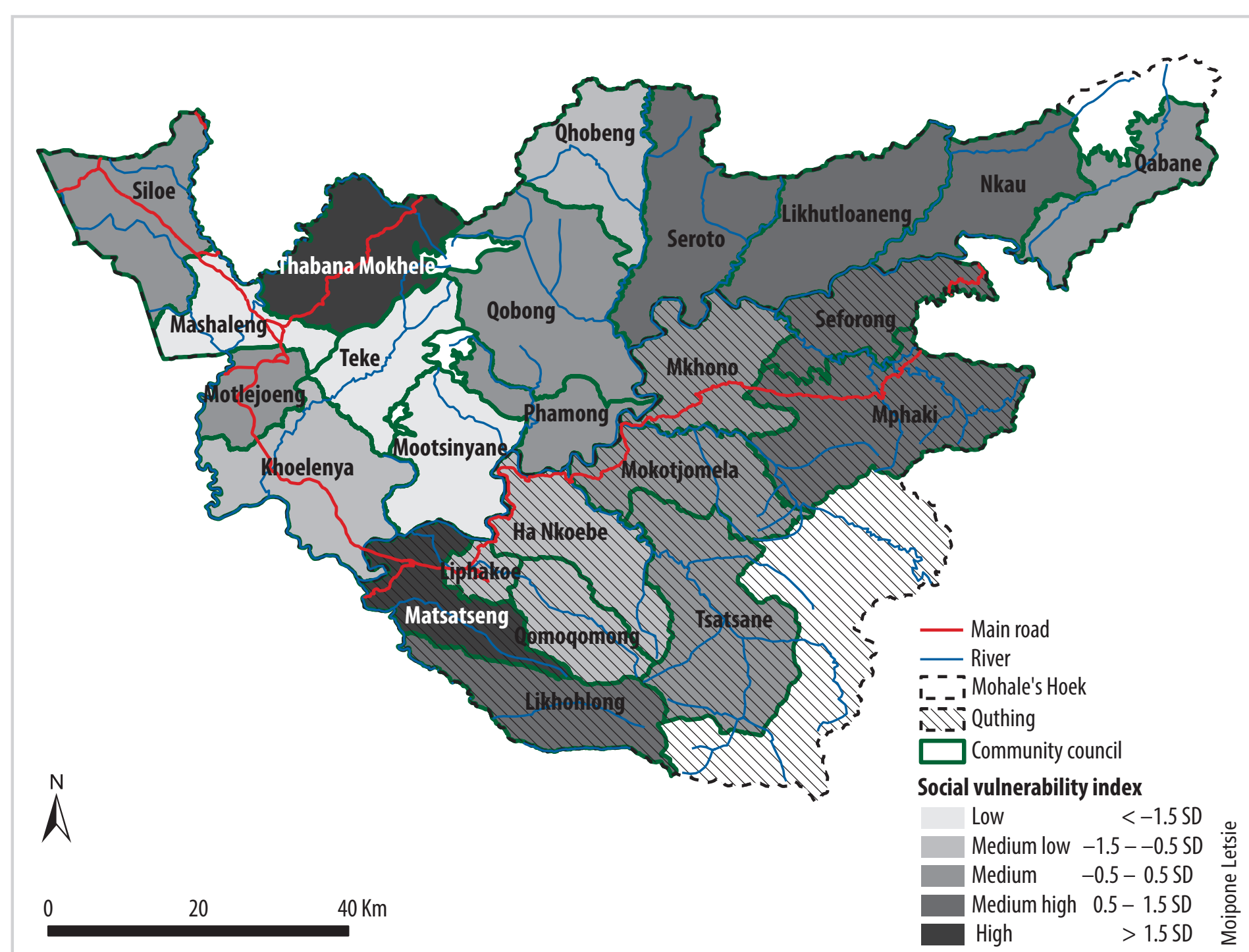
The global research community committed to sustainable development is increasingly acknowledging its societal role and the need for a new type of research in which scientists link disciplines and coproduce transformation knowledge with stakeholders. What is the role of scientific journals in supporting publication of this type of work?



Transformation knowledge for improving DRR efforts

Le Masson explores whether the Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) approaches applied in Ladakh were effective after the catastrophic 2010 floods. She shows how DRR policies can become more effective when they take into account the socioeconomic construction of risks and latent development obstacles (eg corruption) and illustrates how DRR can be done with participation by the local population.

Source: Le Masson V. 2015. Considering vulnerability in Disaster Risk Reduction plans: From policy to practice in Ladakh, India. *Mountain Research and Development* 35(2):104–114. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1659/MRD-JOURNAL-D-14-00086.1>



Systems knowledge on social vulnerability to natural hazards

Letsie and Grab assess and map the social vulnerability of communities to natural hazards in Lesotho. To this purpose, they adapt a place-based social vulnerability index developed for the United States to the Lesotho context. The study results show a clustering of highly vulnerable communities in the rural highlands as a result of underdevelopment, poverty, and inaccessibility.

Source: Letsie MM, Grab SW. 2015. Assessment of social vulnerability to natural hazards in the mountain kingdom of Lesotho. *Mountain Research and Development* 35(2):115–125. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1659/MRD-JOURNAL-D-14-00087.1>

Target knowledge for developing mountain-specific DRR measures

Zimmermann and Keiler conduct a systematic, mountain-specific review of key international policy efforts to tackle disaster risk reduction (DRR) and include fresh insights from the 2015 Sendai negotiations. They suggest linking these policies with other frameworks (eg the Sustainable Development Goals), as well as including a focus on resilience building and translating them into practical steps appropriate to local conditions.

Source: Zimmermann M, Keiler M. 2015. International frameworks for Disaster Risk Reduction: Useful guidance for sustainable mountain development? *Mountain Research and Development* 35(2):195–202. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1659/MRD-JOURNAL-D-15-00006.1>

MRD's approach

The current scientific publication system based mainly on objectivity and replicability is only partially adequate for assessing the new kind of science proposed by Future Earth. MRD offers an adapted review process to assess and validate knowledge that is co-produced and value oriented. It differentiates between three forms of knowledge and has defined specific review criteria and processes that are reflected in MRD's three peer-reviewed sections: MountainDevelopment, MountainResearch, and MountainAgenda.

The decision about what form of knowledge a paper contributes to most can be a matter of debate; MRD does not aim to be prescriptive in this respect. Rather, distinguishing between the three forms of knowledge aims at triggering reflection on science for sustainable development and providing more adequate review.

Special review criteria in the MountainDevelopment section

- Does the paper present innovative development approaches/methods that show how to shape the transformation towards more sustainable development?
- Are new evidence-based insights presented and do conclusions contain “short and crisp” key messages for a mountain development/policy community?
- Are insights into the knowledge co-production processes presented and validated?

Who reviews?

2 international academic and development experts

Special review criteria in the MountainResearch section

- Is the paper a unique/useful contribution to the relevant debates?
- Do the authors reflect on the relevance of their work to sustainable development in mountains?
- Do the authors point to how this study is transferable to other mountain regions?

Further criteria used for assessing the value of a standard scientific article are replicability, objectivity, generalizability, etc.

Who reviews?

2 or more international academic experts

Special review criteria in the MountainAgenda section

- Is the topic relevant to sustainable development in mountains?
- Is the state of the art on the topic up to date, comprehensive, and relevant to the issues discussed?
- Are the issues identified in the review of immediate interest and urgent enough to justify the formulation of an agenda?
- Are the arguments leading to the agenda well substantiated and convincing?

Who reviews?

1 Editor and 1 member of the International Editorial Board, in an open review process.



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